



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Chairman

NEWS RELEASE

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BAUCUS BILL WOULD CREATE NEW ENERGY AGENCY

Energy Research Act of 2007 seeks to end dependence on oil with cutting-edge research

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.) wants to create an energy research agency that can ensure America’s energy independence and economic competitiveness. The Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy (ARPA-E) would be responsible for conceiving, researching, and building new technologies to break America’s dependence on foreign oil. Baucus has introduced the Energy Research Act of 2007 to create ARPA-E as an independent agency outside the Department of Energy, with a director appointed by and answerable to the President. The Baucus legislation funds ARPA-E at twice the level of previous proposals.

“America’s energy problems aren’t going to be solved with the same old ideas. We need to shake off the cobwebs of conventional thinking. We need to provide researchers with a place where the sky’s the limit and the goal is nothing less than total energy independence,” said Baucus. **“ARPA-E has to be about tomorrow, not about the tired energy policies of today. So to get truly outside the box, ARPA-E should be outside the Energy Department. The idea of ARPA-E has been knocking around Congress for more than a year, and it’s time to get this agency up and running hard.”**

ARPA-E was first proposed by the Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century, but Baucus’s Energy Research Act of 2007 adds additional independence, funding, and authority to its mandate. It requires a small, elite staff of experts, provides higher salaries to attract and keep America’s best technical minds, and limits the tenure of staff to ensure continual innovation. ARPA-E would be authorized to award cash prizes to encourage and accelerate energy research accomplishments.

Baucus first introduced legislation to create ARPA-E in 2006, as one of several proposals aimed at improving America’s ability to compete in the global marketplace. The Energy Research Act of 2007 is expected to be referred to the Senate Energy Committee. Text will be available at <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/legislation.htm>.

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